

Psychologist in the Educational System: His Role in the Prevention of Addiction and Deviance

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of various types of addiction and deviance among children and adolescents has led to the necessity of psychological follow-up of children in the educational environment. Another high-priority task is to create a safe environment for childhood. The purpose of this article is to present the results of monitoring the state of work on prevention of addictive and suicidal behavior of children and adolescents in the educational establishment of Russia, as well as a substantiation of the school psychologists' role in the work of deviant behavior prevention. The leading method in studying addictive and deviant behavior prevention is large-scale monitoring. The monitoring identifies both the strengths and weaknesses of the work of psychological follow-up in the educational environment of the Russian Federation. The main findings of this study are: a determination of the state indicators of preventive work in the Russian educational system and the development of a model for the work of school psychologists in addictive and deviant behavior prevention. The practical significance of the study is in identifying and generalizing the positive experience of the formation of effective preventive approaches. These approaches should give psychological assistance to children and adolescents in difficult life situations. The results of the article can be used in the work of government bodies exercising administration in education, as a tool for diagnostic and preventive psychologists in schools, and in the system of general and additional professional education. It can be implemented in advanced training for specialists of addiction and deviance prevention of minors as well.

KEYWORDS

Addiction, deviance, minors, prevention, model, psychologists

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Introduction

The modern situation of development in Russian society is accompanied by the growth of negative social phenomena in children and adolescents like deviant behavior. The changes of behavior patterns and whole axiological sphere of young generation are accompanied by socio-economic processes occurring in the country (Idobaeva, 2015).

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Supposedly, the right to adequate living conditions for children is guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Rights of Child, the Constitution of the Russian Federation, and many other documents. However, it is not always realized in practice.

Unfortunately, children are the most unprotected category of the population. It is adult help and support that children need now and today. The problems which have arisen among children also need urgent decisions, now and today. A child's life cannot occur in a "wait and see" attitude, waiting for major changes at the state level, such as family and childhood policy changes (Artamonova, 2012, 2013). What can we do in order to help our children and provide a protective barrier to neutralize the effects of various negative factors on a child?

The growth of deviant behavior, the spread of alcoholism and drug addiction, and the surge of Internet addiction and suicides among children and adolescents cause anxiety in the society. Primarily because they come with negative consequences: the biological, genetic, and social degradation of the person. The part of young representatives is "turned off" from their lives by the impact of addictions that exacerbate their disintegration in a society.

Unfortunately, the scale of these phenomena is a serious threat to national security nowadays. Therefore, the educational establishment plays an important role in the addiction and deviance prevention of children and adolescents. One of the essential conditions for work organization is transparency of education and efficiency of information interaction (Khydyrova, 2015).

Today, school-based prevention of addictive and deviant behavior in educational establishments is becoming a key direction in the work of school psychologists (Perezhogin, 2013, 2016a; Artamonova, 2016). The significance of this work is as a counter to the serious threats that stand in the way of the young population. It is an effort to reduce the number of addicted students that suffer from chemical and nonchemical addictions. It is also an effort for the life of a teenager since we are talking about suicide as an extreme manifestation of autoaggressive behavior (Artamonova & Efimova, 2014; Efimova & Oschepkov, 2014; Efimova, 2015a). And the issue is very serious: how to not lose these children. Sometimes, literally. So, monitoring activities in educational establishments were done in the field of addictive and suicidal behavior prevention of children and adolescents. The monitoring is devoted to solving this global problem, as well as developing a model of school psychologists' work on addictive and deviant behavior prevention.

Materials and methods

During the study following methods were used:

- theoretical: analysis, synthesis, concretizing, generalization, analogue method and modeling,
- diagnostic: questioning, the tasks and targets method;
- empirical: the observation of educational establishments, of normative and methodological literature on the research issue; mathematical statistics approach and graphic presentation of results.

The Federal State Budgetary Scientific Institution "Centre for the Protection of the Rights of Children" has been carrying out monitoring on the state of addictive and suicidal behavior prevention among children and adolescents in educational institutions in the 2015/16 academic year. It is an ongoing study that covers 85 regions of the Russian Federation.

Traditionally, the prevention of addictive behaviors was under the jurisdiction of health and social workers and law enforcement officers. However, in recent years we can see a shift of emphasis from behavioral to existential issues such as a search for purpose in life or personal and professional self-determination. In this regard, nowadays psychologists play a key role in addictive behavior prevention, on the one hand standing with students in positions of authority, on the other, spending a lot of time in immediate proximity to them.

Frequently, substance, alcohol, and tobacco abuse, as well as gambling and online casino addiction among students is a way of avoiding their own problems. Such distortion occurs when a teenager is unable to share his or her problems due to various circumstances, e.g., high anxiety, or a syndrome of "learned helplessness" when it seems that nobody can help and understand him or her. One of the work missions of the school psychologists in educational institutions is the skill formation for adolescents of successfully overcoming their problems in difficult life situations. Therefore, currently there is a fundamentally new approach in the field of school-based prevention of addictive behavior. In implementing this approach it is essential to carry out a policy of expanding the staff of school psychologists, as well as getting teacher-psychologists to a whole new level that will help them to effectively work on school-based prevention among students.

Results

The monitoring work on addictive behavior prevention among students of educational institutions was conducted in May 2016 (Belozerova, 2016). The monitoring is aimed at early detection of the use of illegal drugs and psychotropic substances. Educational organizations from 85 entities of the Russian Federation took part in this monitoring. The total number of students which participated in the monitoring during the 2015/16 academic year is 3,390,192 students from 11 to 18 years old. Of that number 2,584,721 were in educational organizations — 609,014 were in professional educational organizations, and 195,598 in higher education organizations, that is 1,438,614 people more than in the 2014/15 academic year. The proportion of students who refused to participate in the monitoring in Russia in the 2015/16 academic year was 4.5% of the total number of students 11 to 18 years old.

Using the monitoring results, the authors obtained comparative data about the groups of students exposed to "social risk" of illegal drug and psychotropic substance use. The highest percentage (11.6%) of students at "social risk" is among students in professional educational organizations. On the whole, the total number of students, classified as a student group at "social risk" increased from 7.7% to 8.2 % compared to 2015.

In the second part of the monitoring, information was provided about addictive behavior prevention among students in educational institutions. In particular, the regions provided information about preventive activities for addictive behavior of children and adolescents for teachers for the 2015/16 academic year, as well as the total number of participants (teachers). Information was also provided about the preventive activities for the addictive behavior of children and adolescents for students for the 2015/16 academic year, as well as the total number of participants (students). In addition, the regional representatives estimated the work for the prevention of addictive behavior of children and adolescents in educational institutions. It was a rating scale where 1 is virtually not organized and 10 meant it was organized at a very high level. A data slice of the 26 regions of the Russian Federation is given in Table 1.



Table 1. The number of preventive activities in the regions for the addictive behavior of children and adolescents for students for the 2015/16 academic year; total amount of participants (teaching stuff)

Concern	Alcohol and tobacco abuse prevention		Substance abuse prevention		Internet addiction prevention		HIV/AIDS prevention	
	Number of activities	Number of participants	Number of activities	Number of participants	Number of activities	Number of participants	Number of activities	Number of participants
Activities								
Conferences	1025	65539	1276	43341	209	8723	181	38814
Seminars	766	44086	2504	99991	563	18585	756	39389
Advanced trainings for all categories of education specialists	92	5212	162	24610	57	4107	90	21103
Advanced trainings for special categories of professionals including school psychologists stuff	38	1184	45	1435	25	1156	15	985

As can be seen from the table data, the amount of advanced training for special categories of professionals, including school psychologists, is very little which certainly affects the way in which experts work on the prevention of addictive behavior. According to regional representatives of educational organizations, this work requires significant improvement. Therefore, the introduction of additional measures for staffing, as well as improving the professional level of specialists of school psychology in educational institutions is a priority task in the area of early prevention of addictive behavior among students.

The authors did another monitoring – a monitoring of the state of suicidal behavior prevention among students in educational establishments (Efimova & Fonderkina, 2016).

Urgent statistics about the number of suicides among children and adolescents in Russia show that every year about 2,500 minors are taking their own lives. Russia takes the 1st place in the world for the number of adolescent suicides for every 100,000 people. According to this, an urgent issue that should be resolved is the development of a prevention system for suicidal behavior of minors. Psychological services play a key role in the prevention systems of educational organizations.

In 2016 the number of suicides is approximately the same level as in 2015 according to the results of monitoring of the prevention of suicidal behavior of children and adolescents in educational institutions of Russia by the state. However, the growth of suicide attempts reported in the age group of 11 to 16 years old is dangerously high (Table 2).

Table 2. Suicidal attempts / completed suicides in various age categories of minors in 2015-2016 years

Year/ the age of participants	2015 year			2016 year		
	7-10 y.o.	11-16 y.o.	17-18 y.o.	7-10 y.o.	11-16 y.o.	17-18 y.o.
Suicidal behavior						
Suicidal attempts	30	866	445	27	1159	542
Completed suicides	9	463	275	9	443	178

The Monitoring results showed a student group at "social risk" of suicidal behavior, where again the most dangerous was the age category 11 to 16 years old - 26,185 people (62% of students in the at "social risk" group). Among the children 7 to 10 years old at "social risk" group is 7,090 people (17% of students in the at "social risk" group), and among 17 to 18 year-olds - 8,826 persons (21 % of students in the at "social risk" group) (Table 3).

Table 3. Number of children of group at "social risk" in 2016 year

Age	Overall population of children	"Social risk" group	% of overall population of children	% % of "social risk" group
7 - 10	6352943	7090	0,11	16,8
11-16	8057063	26185	0,32	62,2
17-18	1919951	8826	0,45	21,0
Total amount	16329957	42101	0,88	100

Undoubtedly, school psychology services play a key role in the work organization of suicidal behavior prevention in among children and adolescents. At the same time, the staffing levels of psychological services leave a lot to be desired.

Table 4. Psychology services staffing level in the regions of the Russian Federation in 2015 year

System of education	General education		Secondary vocational education
	Psychology service in the school		
Not organized	20622		720
1 psychologist	20395		1541
2- 3 psychologists	1957		151
4-5 psychologists	500		25

Is it possible to talk about psychology services in the system of general education if 4 to 5 psychologists work in only 2.19% of educational institutions, and the majority of educational institutions (89.25%) have only 1 psychologist for the whole school? Obviously, not. The current situation is similar for psychology services in secondary vocational education.



Discussions

Russian scientists increasingly frequently analyze the contemporary realities and peculiarities of the manifestation of behavioral disorders in adolescence. They discuss such forms as alcohol and drug abuse, delinquent and aggressive behavior, suicide attempts and other forms of self-aggression, sexual deviation, non-chemical forms of addictive behavior (gambling), Internet addiction, love addiction, workaholism, food addiction, and so on. They also study the neuropsychological patterns of various forms of deviant behavior (Pankov, Rumyantsev & Trostanetskaya, 2001; Perezhogin, Emelyantseva & Kryukovsky, 2002; Perezhogin, 2016b; Egorov & Igumnov, 2005; Efimova et al., 2015).

School is the main institution for the socialization of children. It can serve as a tool for the solution of serious social problems as well. One of the main dangers is a transformation of individual psychological deviance (including suicidal and addictive behavior, extremism, and bullying) into mass social phenomena (Volkova, 2008). A school psychologist plays a significant role in the prevention of various deviations and his or her competence helps contribute to the resilience of the child, releasing his or her potential and developing the skill of problem solving. Along with this the school psychological service should focus on providing professional support for the family, organizing and directing the interaction of family members (Podolsky & Pogodina, 2013, 2014), and educating parents on various issues in difficult situations, including suicidal behavior (Artamonova & Efimova, 2014).

Preventive work in educational organizations should be carried out both in the professional activities of teachers and specialists (including prevention issues in the educational process), as well as in the framework of the special extra-curricular activities. It is a significant conceptual position of the changes in current practice. As the result of this activity the prevention programs should be developed and aimed to the key target groups: students, teachers, experts, and the student's family. A project focused on the promotion of a healthy lifestyle in the educational environment can be successfully implemented only under the conditions of the formation of interprofessional collaboration and a constructive social network partnership of various educational institutions (Zaretskiy, Bolotnikov & Severniy, 2015).

The main points of school psychology work

So what are the main points on which the work of the school psychologist should be based on in the prevention of deviant behavior in minors? It is important to understand the fundamental approaches of psychological assistance for teenagers in a difficult life situation. When a teenager is feeling a life crisis his behavior depends not only on the objective characteristics of the situation, but also on the subjective perception of the individual (Efimova, Salakhova et al., 2015). The work of the school psychologist for prevention is multifaceted. The main criterion is not the degree of addiction/deviation risk, but the social structure of the teenager's educational organization: the teenager himself, the groups in his social environment and the school (Efimova, 2015b). Accordingly, psychological assistance may be directed at the individual level (e.g. the self-help programs "I am myself"), at the peer level (e.g., training for volunteers "Peer to peer", program of prevention of addictive behavior "Ship", "Boat", "The Way home", etc.), or at the level of the teaching staff (e.g. the program of skill formation of early detection of suicidal behavior in minors, "See, Hear, Understand").

Undoubtedly, the activities of a school psychologist for deviant behavior prevention will differ depending on the stage of the educational process (Kazakova, 2003).

For primary school they are: early diagnosis and correction of disorders in child development and education; prevention and correction of his or her fears and anxieties; prevention of "fear of school"; overcoming problems related to preparedness for school; ensuring adaptation to school without conflict; increasing an interest of children in learning activities; the development of cognitive and academic motivation; the development of self-organization and autonomy; expanding creativity (Kalatskaya & Drozdikova-Zaripova, 2016).

At the primary school stage the school psychologist helps the child to adapt to new training conditions. Then the psychologist supports the teenager in solving problems in his or her personal and axiological self-determination and self-development. He assists in socialization, life skills, and creating constructive relationships with parents and peers, as well as attempting to prevent deviant behavior and drug addiction (Kalyagina, 2009; Kiy, 2005). In high school the school psychologist assists in issues of professional orientation and professional identity. The psychologist supports resolving existential problems (self-actualization, the search for the meaning of life, the formation of values of life and personal identification). He or she assists in the development of time perspective for senior pupils, in the development of goal setting ability, and psychosocial competence development (Podolskiy & Pogozhina, 2013; Podolskiy, 2015).

Methods and techniques of the school psychologist

Methods and techniques of the school psychologist that can be used for addiction and suicide risk prevention are the following:

- diagnostic: the use of pedagogical and psychological screening techniques for a rapid identification of the "social risk" group in the educational environment;
- person-oriented psychotechnologies for therapy: individual psychocorrective conversations, group therapy, life coaching, suggestive programs (held by invited specialists);
- rehabilitation psychotechnologies (training): transactional analysis, psychodrama, intellectual training, personal development training, role-playing, etc.;
- organizational: staff meetings, consultations, seminars, group discussions and round tables;
- informational: wallet guides, poster information, information sheets, booklets and ICT.

Principal stages of the preventive work of school psychologists

We highlight the principal stages in the preventive activities of school psychologists:

- diagnostic phase (awareness of the problem and its target groups);
- search stage (collecting the necessary information on the means of solving the problems, communication of all participants, creating the conditions for understanding information by the child);
- advisory-projective stage (a discussion with all concerned parties about possible solutions of the problem, analyzing positive and negative aspects of different



solutions, forecasting efficiency, the choosing different methods, constructing a plan for solving the problem, the distributing responsibility for its implementation, determinating the sequence of actions, specifying deadlines and the possibility of adjusting the plans);

- assignment (implementation) stage (plan implementation);
- reflective stage (consideration of the results of the activities of psychological and pedagogical support services in solving the particular problem). This can be the final stage in the solution of individual problems or the starting stage for the design of special methods of prevention and correction of mass problems in educational organizations.

The statements mentioned above formed the basis for the development of school psychologist work models for addictive and deviant behavior prevention among minors on order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (Artamonova & Khydyrova, 2016).

Conclusion

1. The analysis of the data from the all-Russian monitoring identified both strengths and weaknesses in the work organization on addictive and suicidal behavior prevention among children and adolescents in the educational environment of the Russian Federation. The indicators of the state preventive work were highlighted as well as the key vectors of preventive work improvement in the educational system of Russia.

2. The article substantiates a new approach to addictive and deviant behavior prevention among children and adolescents which includes all levels of the social structure of educational institutions. The social structure of the educational process includes all areas of a teenager including his or her social environment and school. The success of addictive and deviant behavior prevention depends on the effective interaction of the educational institution with the child's family and the creation of support in an appropriate educational environment.

3. A generic model of the work of school psychologists for addictive and deviant behavior prevention among minors is based on the results of the study. A peculiarity of this model is in its interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature. School is a crucial factor in the development and strengthening of the personal preventive resources of the child. But effectiveness in the prevention of addictive and deviant behavior among children and adolescents cannot be achieved without operational cooperation and coordination of the various bodies, institutions, and agencies which are making the decisions in this field.

4. The necessary conditions for the organization of this activity were identified by the systematization of approaches of addictive and deviant behavior prevention among children and adolescents:

- positive changes in the educational environment of the adolescent which lead to internal structural changes of his or her personality;
- optimization of school psychology activity focused on the adolescent's understanding of life as the main value and enhancing student changes within themselves;
- support for the at "social risk" group of adolescents which includes diagnosis and individual and group correction;
- enrichment of the special competence of teachers and parents in the field of early

prevention of addictive and deviant behavior;

- development of strategies for early prevention of addictive and deviant behavior at the federal and municipal levels.

5. The scientific value of the study consists of the creation of a database of the work in the regions of the Russian Federation on the prevention of addictive, deviant and suicidal behavior among children and adolescents, as well as the comparison of empirical indicators reflecting the dynamics of the state of work in this direction and the identification of mechanisms for improving the system of preventive work among students.

6. The practical utility of the study is in the identification of effective forms and work methods, as well as the generalization of the positive experience in psychological and pedagogical practice and emphasizing the new highlights in this direction. In addition, the main research findings are the model development of school psychologists in educational institutions for early detection and prevention of addictive and deviant behavior among minors. The results of the study can be used in the work of government bodies exercising administration in education, as a tool in the diagnostic and preventive psychology work in schools, and in the system of general and additional professional education.

7. In the research process there are new questions requiring answers, and new hypotheses that need confirmation or rejection. In turn, that opens up prospects for further study on research issues, as well as the improvement of preventive activities of children and adolescents.

Recommendations

The following guidelines will contribute to the priority task of forming a safe environment in childhood:

1. The development and implementation of training programs and advanced training for specialists, including specialists in educational institutions for the detection and prevention of addictive and deviant behavior among minors (alcoholism, smoking, consumption of psychoactive substances, suicidal behavior, internet addiction, and aggressive behavior).

2. The development and implementation of training programs and advanced training for specialists of education, health, and culture and social protection for the organization of education for parents and psycho-pedagogical support of family education.

3. The development and implementation of preventative training for teachers, managers, and office staff with the purpose of professional development in working with children with deviant behaviors in order to assist them in development, studying, and social adaptation.

4. Carrying out an all-Russian competition for the best practices of early detection and prevention of addictive and deviant behavior.

5. National training webinars on the issue of early detection and prevention of addictive and deviant behavior among minors.

6. Training for teaching staff (social workers, psychologists) on internet content assessment, analysis of the information, and prevention of risk of involvement in illegal activity via the internet.

7. The organization of all-Russian, inter-regional scientific/practical conferences, seminars, and round tables with participation of representatives from all the members



of the system for prevention of deviant behavior among minors. This will enable analysis and synthesis of research results and practical experience for prevention of addictive and deviant behavior among minors.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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